POLICY DOCUMENTATION

47th ANNUAL CONFERENCE
1984

FCM

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Fédération canadienne des municipalités

Task Force Progress Reports

Task Force On Municipal Finance
Task Force On Social Policy
Task Force On Technology
Task Force On Housing
Task Force On Urban Transit

FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES
PROGRESS REPORT
of the
TASK FORCE ON TAXATION AND FUNDING FOR
MUNICIPAL FINANCE
to the
FCM ANNUAL CONFERENCE
WINNIPEG, 1984

CHAIRMAN: Alderman H. Taylor, President, S.U.M.A.

MEMBERS: Councillor J. Ernst, Winnipeg,
Mayor M. Hampton, President, A.Y.C.

MANDATE

The Task Force on Taxation and Funding for Municipal Finance has met throughout the year to determine the issues, problems and solutions in the area of municipal finance. The area that falls within the mandate of this Task Force is very broad and extremely complex.

In order to assess differences in the approach to municipal taxation, the Task Force undertook to survey Provincial Associations and a sample of individual municipalities to determine differing approaches to a number of the central taxation problems.

The results of this survey were, as expected, extremely varied.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The survey resulted in the emergence of three basic themes that were common to municipalities across Canada. The first involved the inequities caused by a heavy reliance on property tax to meet municipal financial obligations. A second theme that emerged clearly from the survey results and requires separate emphasis is the reliance on property tax to finance the high and increasing cost of education in our communities. The third and, again, related theme that recurs in the survey results is the need to look at more equitable arrangements for revenue sharing among the three orders of governments.

POINTS OF PRINCIPLE

Although the particular financial concerns of municipalities vary from province to province, there remain areas of mutual concern which transcend formal lines of constitutional jurisdiction and the specific policies of provincial governments vis à vis their financial arrangements with their municipalities.

One commonality that is observed across jurisdictions is the rising cost of municipal services of all kinds, particularly local social services and education. At the same time, the federal government has used its spending power to transcend jurisdiction, often in a way which has caused financial strains for municipalities and compromised the capacity for long-term financial planning between the provinces and their municipalities. These difficulties are particularly evident in a number of federal support programs that have expired in recent years,

at a time when the need for assistance is rising. A number of such programs relate to the building and renewal of various aspects of municipal infrastructure, but all aspects of federal fiscal and monetary policies impact on municipal financial planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force will put forward recommendations in the coming year on a number of the areas within its mandate. The Task Force has been waiting for the publication of a book on local government finance by Professor Harry Kitchen of Trent University and of a study that has resulted from municipal submissions to the Macdonald Commission on Canada's economic future. It is important that the FCM Task Force recommendations take into consideration the findings of these two studies.

POINTS OF ACTION AND INTENDED ACTION

The Task Force will complete consideration of its own survey results in light of the above-mentioned publications and will, subsequently, make recommendations to be brought forward to the National Board of Directors and to the 1985 Annual Convention.

FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES
PROGRESS REPORT
of the
TASK FORCE ON SOCIAL POLICY
to the
FCM ANNUAL CONFERENCE
WINNIPEG, 1984

CHAIRMAN: Alderman C. Reid, City of Calgary

MEMBERS: Warden J. Wadden, Cape Breton County
Mayor D. Sian, President, N.W.T.A. of M.

MANDATE

The Task Force was given a mandate to develop a policy position paper for a complex area of municipal responsibility and decision-making. At the outset, it was clear that a considerable amount of thought and effort would have to go into Task Force work. Also, a great deal of consultation would be required with municipalities and various organizations and government agencies involved in social policy development and planning. It was concluded that it would take up to two years to complete the task.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

To make the assignment less complex and more relevant to the concerns of municipal government, the Task Force has deliberately focused on the capabilities of municipal governments to do social policy development and planning. To this point, the Task Force has avoided direct reference to social services and questions

pertaining to the delivery of services. This area of concern will be addressed later. This is not to suggest that social services and their delivery are unimportant, but to observe that the importance of social policy and planning is made clearer if it is dealt with as a separate matter. With respect to the latter, the Task Force is concerned about the capabilities of municipal governments to incorporate into their decision-making information and professional advice about the likely impacts of their decisions on the social environments of their communities.

POINTS OF PRINCIPLE

Unlike other areas of municipal responsibility, social policy tends to deal with intangible questions. It is relatively easy to measure the need for and plan the provision of 'hard services'. Even so, like culture and heritage, the health of the social environment is of critical concern to municipalities.

From experience, many municipal politicians have learned how social problems may be caused or exacerbated simply because no effort was made to evaluate the social consequences of various decisions. The provision and expansion of social services not infrequently becomes a costly reaction to situations which could have been avoided with some foresight, professional advice and anticipatory planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force has prepared recommendations covering a number of areas of concern. These range from the need for greater intergovernmental consultation,

through the incorporation of quality of life factors into major municipal physical planning proposals, to the development of the FCM information bank of social policy and initiatives.

POINTS OF ACTION AND INTENDED ACTION

The Task Force has completed the first two stages of its work. These have involved the preparation of a draft policy position paper and circulation to selected municipalities, government agencies and relevant organizations. Once the Task Force has received responses, it will re-draft the paper and proceed with the related issue of social services. The final document will be submitted to next year's Conference for consideration.

FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES
PROGRESS REPORT
of the
TASK FORCE ON OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES
IN TECHNOLOGY
to the
FCM ANNUAL CONFERENCE
WINNIPEG, 1984

CHAIRMAN: Councillor A. Ducharme, Winnipeg, M.A.U.M.

MEMBER: Commissioner A. Loucks, Sherwood, P.E.I.

MANDATE

The Task Force was set up to consider the opportunities and challenges in new computer technology that could be relevant to municipalities in their everyday administration and in the planning and implementing of policy in various areas.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

For the first year of consideration the Task Force focus was narrowed to look at the possibility of linking Canadian municipalities by computer to already established American information and data bases. The main areas of interest in the urban information field have been the Local Government Information System (LOGIN) which provides access to research in various fields and Public Technology Incorporated (PTI) which accesses different data bases on behalf of its clients on a user fee basis.

POINTS OF PRINCIPLE

The FCM and its members are open to the advantages of participating in international information systems. There is a concern on the part of some members, however, that we should be promoting the development of Canadian data bases wherever possible. The second point of concern is that the FCM provide a focal point for establishing a link between Canadian users and American services. There could be a revenue advantage for the FCM in playing a central role in accessing this kind of service for our members. We must be thoughtful of the need, however, to ensure that domestic data bases are developed and maintained in Canada to meet Canada's needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force is preparing a number of recommendations that will be brought forward on the completion of its survey of the services available.

POINTS OF ACTION AND INTENDED ACTION

The Task Force has conducted a survey of the range of services available both in Canada and the United States and has undertaken discussion with representatives of various services to determine where the interests of Canadian municipalities are best served. The Task Force's area of concern is wide and complex. The first stage report will be brought forward during the coming year. A major area of future interest will be the use of high technologies to improve the efficiency and productivity of local administration, particularly in small municipalities.

FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES

PROGRESS REPORT

of the

TASK FORCE ON HOUSING

to the

FCM ANNUAL CONFERENCE

WINNIPEG, 1984

CHAIRMAN: Alderman D. Holmes, City of Ottawa

MEMBERS: Mayor M. Harcourt, City of Vancouver
Alderman D. Reville, City of Toronto
Conseiller P. Chenier, City of Hull
D/Mayor S. Duff, City of St. John's

MANDATE

There is no other area of public sector responsibility that has more blurred and confused the responsibilities of Canada's three orders of Government than the housing area. Public sector involvement in housing is relatively recent in Canada. The federal government was the first to enter the field, creating the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation as a vigorous response to an acute housing shortage. Over the years, some provinces have moved to become involved, but in unique and different ways. The municipal concern for planning and the provision of services to property puts local government closest to the real housing needs of Canadians. The FCM Task Force on Housing which was formed from the original FCM Task Force on Social Housing and the FCM Task Force on the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, has been given the responsibility to identify the pressing issues in housing, to look at the options available and to evaluate relevant government programs.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Municipal governments, on the front lines of real social needs, often find themselves confronted with tragic situations which they do not have the resources to deal with. In some communities, there is a shortage of housing in all price ranges. While in others, there is adequate housing but those who need the housing lack the resources to pay for it. A common theme emerges; for the neediest Canadians, the private market place will not provide necessary quality housing at an affordable price.

The Government of Canada has moved to assess its involvement in housing and to ensure that tax dollars are benefiting those most in need. But CMHC's most recent studies have not been fully accepted by professionals in the field. The differences of perspective are such that only by full consultation among all orders of government and with the private sector can a full appreciation of and a creative response to the situation be achieved. The FCM Task Force on Housing will provide a vehicle to bring municipal concerns in housing before the federal government.

POINTS OF PRINCIPLE

Local government, in most cases, is the best equipped of all orders of government to deliver effective housing programs. Local leaders understand community needs. Municipal involvement with non-profit housing corporations has successfully achieved a number of objectives and has demonstrated the potential and municipal capacity in social housing. The municipal world must become a vigorous participant in the public debate on social housing matters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The new Task Force on Housing has initiated activities. It will report to the Board of Directors and make a full report and recommendations to the 1985 Annual Conference.

POINTS OF ACTION AND INTENDED ACTION

A technical committee comprising appointed municipal housing officials has been established to support the Task Force on Housing. The Task Force will establish a working relationship with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Canadian Home Builders Association, provincial governments and related groups such as the Cooperative Housing Foundation of Canada. The objective will be to achieve a high level of intergovernmental and intersectoral exchange and comment on housing issues.

FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES
PROGRESS REPORT
of the
TASK FORCE ON URBAN TRANSIT
to the
FCM ANNUAL CONFERENCE
WINNIPEG, 1984

CHAIRMAN: Councillor J. Eadie, Winnipeg

MEMBERS: Mayor K. Burgess, Brandon
Councillor D. Quirk, Markham

MANDATE

With growth in our large cities and with concerns about the cost of transportation and energy conservation, urban transit promises to be a focus in municipalities over the next decade. The Task Force on Urban Transit was set up to look at the broad spectrum of urban transportation problems as they manifest themselves in our communities.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

A pressing issue that faced the FCM over the past year has been the expiring of the federal government's Urban Transportation Assistance Program (UTAP). The program started in 1978, and, with a one year extension, ended on March 31, 1984. Although there is a requirement to continue a level of assistance in grade separation projects under the Railway Relocation and Crossing Act, it has looked as though assistance made available on the urban transit side of the program would be dropped. For this reason, the Task Force chose to focus its energies in the first year on the UTAP program and on pressing the federal

government to provide successor legislation for both grade separation and urban transit projects.

Points of Principle

With particular reference to the Urban Transportation Assistance Program (UTAP), the FCM made a number of representations to the Minister of Transport. In many communities across Canada the funding made available was inadequate to address important urban transportation problems and to get value for dollars, many communities tended to use the UTAP assistance for grade separation. The FCM Urban Transit Task Force conveyed to the Minister the importance of focussing on urban transit while not abandoning support for grade separation projects.

Recommendations

The Task Force on Urban Transit has prepared preliminary recommendations focussed specifically on UTAP. These recommendations will be refined over the coming year within the context of its overall statement on urban transportation policy.

Points of Action and Intended Action

The Task Force on Urban Transit, having made representations to the Minister of Transport and having represented the position of municipalities on the cancellation of assistance on both grade separation and urban transit, will broaden its focus to consider and assess the components of a national urban transportation policy that will provide a platform from which to discuss urban transportation issues with the various federal departments that have an impact nationally.